

WHITE HOUSE, IN REVISION, ASSERTS BLANKET PARDONS ARE NOT BEING CONSIDERED

'STUDY' IS DENIED

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Scott, After Meeting With Ford, Suggests Case-by-Case Review NYTimes

By JOHN HERBERS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11—President Ford is not giving consideration to blanket amnesty or pardons for the Watergate defendants, spokesmen for the President said today.

This sharply revised position was announced by several officials after widespread opposition was expressed to a White House statement yesterday that the President was studying "the entire matter" of possible pardons for the Watergate defendants.

"There is no study going on," said Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Senate minority leader, after he and other party leaders in Congress met with Mr. Ford this morning. Senator Scott then read a statement by the President that suggested a case-by-case study of requests for pardons.

Privately, some White House officials conceded that Mr. Ford and his assistants had grossly misjudged the public reaction to yesterday's statement. Publicly, there was no such concession, but there was an effort to show that the President's intentions had been misinterpreted.

Barrage of Criticism

For the fourth straight day, the White House struggled under a barrage of public and Congressional criticism that began Sunday when President Ford, without consulting his friends in Congress, his Cabinet or Leon Jaworski, the special Watergate prosecutor, issued an unconditional pardon for former President Richard M. Nixon.

Last night, while the protests

were at a peak, Paul Goebel Jr., a Republican friend of the President who is running for Mr. Ford's old seat in the House of Representatives in Grand Rapids, Mich., spent 30 minutes with Mr. Ford at the White House.

Returning to Grand Rapids, Mr. Goebel told a reporter that he found the President "in excellent humor" and quoted him as saying one reason for pardoning Mr. Nixon was that he felt it was time for the nation to put Watergate behind it and get on with the nation's business.

Instead, the decision to pardon Mr. Nixon seemed to engulf the new Administration in the aftermath of the Watergate scandals and to damage the Administration before Mr. Ford could get it organized.

Yesterday, the President apparently sought to allay some of the criticism by authorizing John W. Hushen, the deputy press secretary, to say the possibility of pardons for Water-

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gate defendants was under study.

One of the protests made against the President was that Mr. Nixon was freed of all charges while some of his subordinates faced trial or prison terms. When asked by a reporter whether Mr. Ford was considering a pardon for John W. Dean 3d, Mr. Nixon's former counsel, and other defendants, Mr. Hushen replied, "I am authorized to say that the entire matter is now under study."

For the rest of the day, Mr. Hushen and other Presidential assistants stuck by that statement as members of Congress reacted with almost universal opposition. It was not until late last night that a high White House official said the President was not giving the matter serious consideration.

Full-Scale Retreat

This morning, a full-scale retreat began. The President issued this statement:

"The announcement yesterday by Mr. Hushen concerning study of the entire matter of Presidential clemency and pardons was prompted by inquiries

to the White House press office concerning Mrs. John Dean's reported statement in reference to pardoning her husband and similar public statements on behalf of others. Such a study is, of course, made for any request concerning pardon of an individual.

"However, no inference should be drawn as to the outcome or such study in any case. Nor

is my pardon of the former President's under the unique circumstances stated by me in granting it, related to any other case which is or may be under study."

There was no acknowledgment of error on the part of the White House. Mr. Hushen said his statement had been interpreted "to appear that a decision had been made." He added that "there was never any consideration of blanket amnesty or pardons." When he was asked yesterday whether his statement covered all persons connected with Watergate, Mr. Hushen replied, "That is correct."

Normal Channels

He and the Congressional leaders who met with Mr. Ford today said the President would consider any request for a pardon through normal channels. Mr. Bushen added that applications for pardon, which could be made through letters to the President and in other ways, would be processed by pardon attorneys in the Justice Department.

It was not clear how many formal requests for pardons had been made from the 48 persons who have been charged with Watergate-related crimes. Mr. Bushen said no requests had been received from defendants who had not yet been tried.

Senator Scott, Representative John J. Rhodes of Arizona, the House minority leader, and 11 other Republican leaders in Congress met with Mr. Ford for almost two hours. Afterwards, at a briefing, Senator

Scott said in response to questions that the President had not consulted any member of Congress in advance about the Nixon pardon. Some were informed shortly before the announcement was made, but none was asked for advice, the Senator said.

Nixon Health Issue

Some of Mr. Ford's advisers who also were not consulted about the pardon are now saying they believe that, in addition to a desire to get the Nixon matter behind him, the President reacted to what appeared to be a concerted campaign by members of the Nixon family and friends of the former President to show that his health was impaired by the possibility of facing charges, making the need for a pardon urgent.

These advisers picture Mr. Ford as a compassionate man who believed the reports of poor health—which have not been publicly documented—and decided largely on his own to take on the burden of the pardon. Once the public outcry began, they said, the Ford staff was thrown into some confusion and dismay, and yesterday's decision to say further pardons were being considered was the result of misjudgment.